

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region

May 27, 2005

ITEM: 19

SUBJECT: Executive Officer's Report

DISCUSSION:

1. **Quail Valley Septic Tank/Subsurface Disposal System Activities** – A town hall meeting has been scheduled for the evening of June 6<sup>th</sup> in Quail Valley concerning the problems with the long-term use of septic tank/subsurface disposal systems in that area. Staff will use this opportunity to brief the community about subsurface soil and groundwater conditions in the area of failing septic systems, the threats to public health and water quality resulting from these failures, staff's proposal for Regional Board consideration of a prohibition on the continued use of septic systems in Quail Valley, and the newly implemented conditional approval process for new development within the proposed prohibition area.

The word is out in the development community concerning the proposed discharge prohibition area, and I have received a number of calls from small developers in the area. I have explained the procedures staff has implemented to conditionally approve new septic systems in the subject area, if those systems strictly meet all requirements for septic system design and installation. I also described our requirement that developers, builders or homeowners are being required to acknowledge, through a notarized document (provided to them), that they have been notified that a septic system discharge prohibition will soon be considered by the Regional Board, and that the prohibition, if adopted, will require connection of all septic systems to a sanitary sewer, when one becomes available to serve that lot.

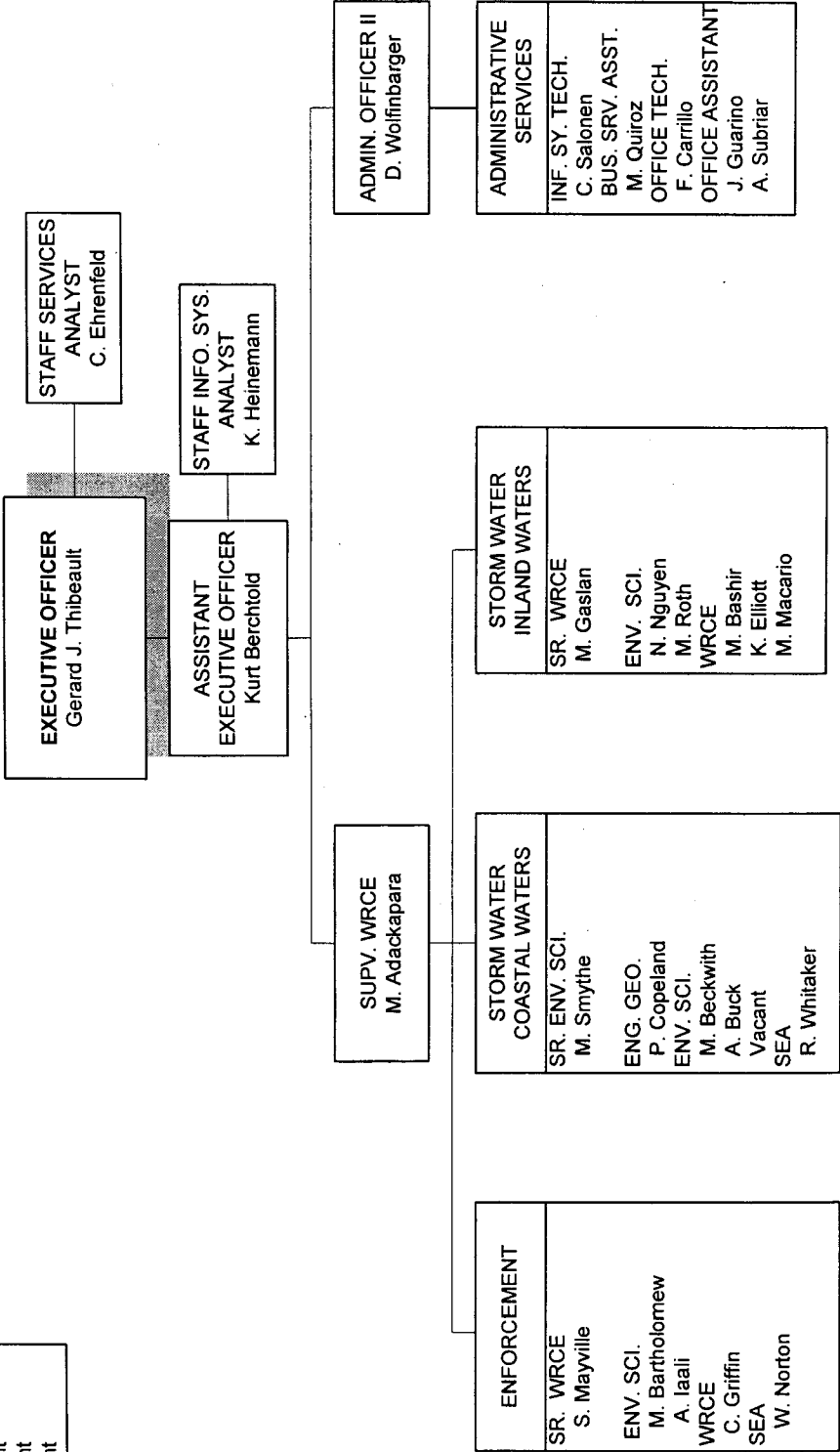
Staff has also added a link to the Regional Board's web site directing visitors and interested persons to a section dedicated to the Quail Valley matter. The web site contains a link that anyone can use to subscribe to an electronic mailing system to receive any updates or documents concerning this matter. The page also contains an email address that can be used for anyone to submit questions or comments, the public meeting notice for the town hall meeting, and a flyer-fact sheet staff produced to provide the community with information concerning the problem.

We are also still on schedule to initiate the formal public hearing process with a special Regional Board meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Board room of the Eastern Municipal Water District.

2. **Staff Re-organization for Enforcement** – In response to a request to all of the regions from the State Board, we have re-organized our staffing and program assignments to create a dedicated Enforcement Unit with a section chief and four staff members (organization chart is attached). We have accomplished this re-organization by assigning Steve Mayville as Section Chief of the Enforcement Unit, and then combining our Surveillance and Enforcement Unit with our remaining Dairy Section staff and resources (this new combined unit has been re-named the Compliance Unit). Much of the enforcement work that has previously been handled by program staff will be re-directed to the new Enforcement Unit. It is hoped that efficiencies will be realized as a result of utilizing Enforcement Unit staff that do only enforcement, instead of having this work done by staff with other duties and potentially conflicting priorities. It is envisioned that our highest priority enforcement assignments will be handled by this group, in consultation with relevant program staff. Also, new enforcement prioritization guidelines are being developed, and we will brief the Board in the near future concerning these guidelines.
3. **Sediment Quality Objectives** – On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Dr. Steve Weisberg, the Executive Director of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), made a presentation to Regional Board Staff concerning SCCWRP's progress in the development of statewide sediment quality objectives for bays and estuaries. This work is being done by SCCWRP through a contract with the State Water Resources Control Board. We were also fortunate that the State Board's project manager for the sediment quality objectives effort was in Southern California on the previous day, and he agreed to stay over and provide our staff with the State Board's perspective on the development of these objectives. The development of a uniform, consistent and scientifically rigorous procedure for developing site-specific sediment quality objectives will be of great value to the coastal regional boards. These objectives will be useful for determining the health of the coastal habitat and for setting cleanup standards for degraded areas. Statewide objectives would have been more useful for staff, since we would not have needed to develop site-specific objectives, but it is now pretty clear to the researchers that statewide objectives would be fairly meaningless, and the vastly differing conditions along the California coastline mean that site-specific objectives would be a more valid and scientifically rigorous regulatory and planning tool.

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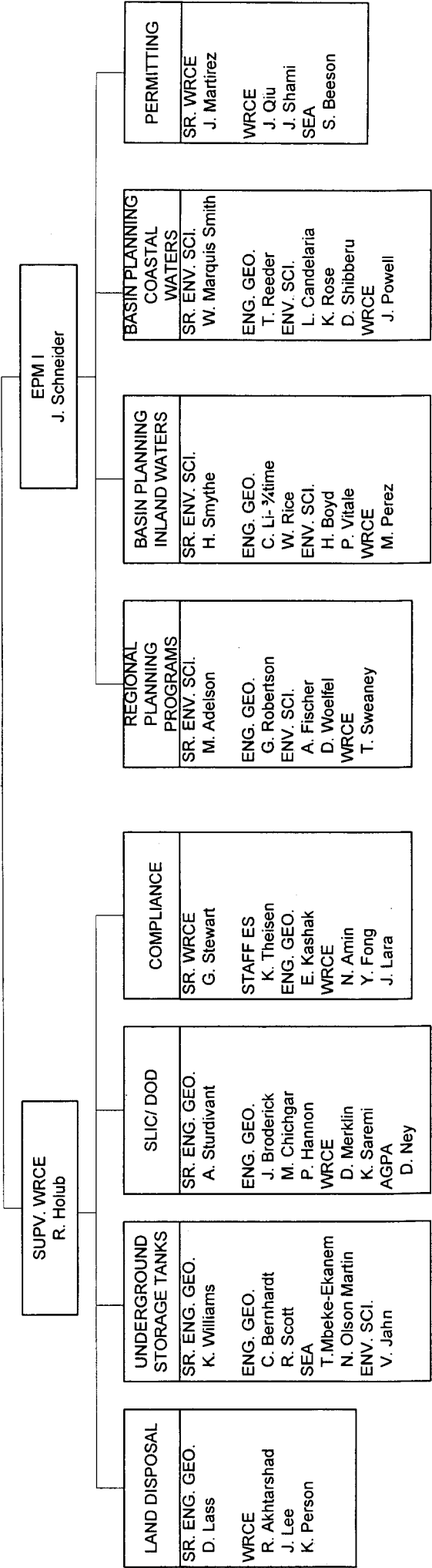
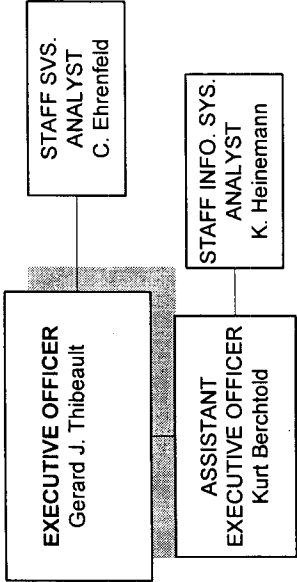
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ May 9, 2005

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May 9, 2005